

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

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FBO-02 A-01 OPR-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CPR-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2542

INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RO

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN INTERFERENCE WITH EMBASSY OPERATIONS

1. SUMMARY. WE HAVE JUST EXPERIENCED A DAY'S WORTH OF BLOCKAGE OF ACCESS BY ROMANIAN CITIZENS TO THE EMBASSY AND AMERICAN LIBRARY STARTING AROUND MID-DAY SATURDAY, APRIL 2 AND ENDING TODAY, APRIL 3. ROMANIAN CITIZENS OTHER THAN THOSE WORKING AT THE LIBRARY OR EMBASSY WERE EITHER CHECKED OR NOT ALLOWED TO ENTER AT ALL. IT TOOK UNTIL NOON ON THE 3RD BEFORE AMBASSADOR AND DCM WERE ABLE TO SEE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GLIGA AND FOREIGN MINISTER MACOVESCU. BOTH OF THEM GAVE ASSURANCES THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO INTENTION TO INTERFERE WITH THE NORMAL OPERATION OF THE EMBASSY. RATHER, ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES HAD HAD SOME INDICATIONS OF DEMONSTRATIONS PLANNED BY FOREIGNERS RESIDENT IN ROMANIA AS WELL AS BY SOME ROMANIANS AND HAD TAKEN PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES. PERHAPS THESE PRECAUTIONS HAD BEEN OVERDONE. IN ANY CASE, WE WERE ASSURED THAT THE SITUATION WHICH HAD CAUSED CONCERN WAS CURRENTLY UNDER CONTROL. THIS MESSAGE
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BEING SENT NIACT TO PRECLUDE POSSIBILITY OF REPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES REACHING WASHINGTON FIRST. END SUMMARY.

2. AT ABOUT NOON APRIL 2, AMERICAN LIBRARY STAFF NOTICED THAT VISITORS WERE BEING STOPPED, ASKED FOR THEIR IDENTTY CARDS, AND THEIR NAMES BEING TAKEN DOWN BY THE MILITIA. WHEN QUESTIONED, THE

MILITIA MAN SAID THOSE WERE THE INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED THAT MORNING. LIBRARY DIRECTOR THEREUPON CLOSED LIBRARY (IT WAS DUE TO CLOSE FAIRLY SHORTLY ANYWAY) AND HAD STAFF MEMBER REMAIN OUTSIDE LIBRARY ENCLOSURE TO RECEIVE BOOKS THAT WERE BEING RETURNED. AROUND 3 P.M., ECON COUNSELOR REPORTED THAT MILITIA MAN STATIONED AT EMBASSY HAD REFUSED PERMISSION FOR ROMANIAN MECHANIC (NOT EMBASSY EMPLOYEE) TO ENTER EMBASSY GROUNDS. AFTER THE FIRST REPORT FROM THE LIBRARY, DCM TALKED TO AMERICAN DESK OFFICER RANGHET WHO PROMISED TO GET BACK WITH SOME EXPLANATION. RANGHET WAS NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN NOR COULD HIS IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR BE FOUND. AMBASSADOR THEREFORE IN EVENING ATTEMPTED TO REACH EITHER FOREIGN MINISTER MACOVESCU OR DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GLIGA, BOTH OF WHOM WERE UNAVAILABLE ALL EVENING ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR INSISTED, AS HAD DCM EARLIER, THAT MATTER WAS MOST URGENT. ALSO IN THE EVENING RSO REACHED HIS MILITIA CONTACT WHO CALLED HIM BACK TWENTY MINUTES LATER TO SAY THAT ALL WAS NORMAL. RSO THEN QUERIED MILITIA MAN ON DUTY WHO SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE STILL TO REFUSE ENTRY TO ANY ROMANIAN CITIZEN. MORNING OF APRIL 3 AMBASSADOR QUESTIONED MILITIA MAN ON DUTY WHO REPEATED SAME INSTRUCTIONS, SAYING ONLY EXCEPTION WAS FOR ROMANIAN EMPLOYEES AND OF COURSE FOREIGNERS. HAVING HEARD NOTHING AS OF MID-MORNING, AMBASSADOR ATTEMPTED AGAIN TO REACH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL AND WAS GRANTED A MEETING WITH GLIGA AT NOON.

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3. FOLLOWING USUAL AMENITIES, I OPENED CONVERSATION WITH GLIGA BY REVIEWING IN DETAIL EVENTS OF LAST 24 HOURS CONCERNING "EMBASSY BLOCKADE" AND OUR INABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANYONE IN AUTHORITY IN MINISTRY. I TOLD HIM IT WAS AN UNACCEPTABLE STATE OF AFFAIRS. UNLIKE PREVIOUS TIMES IN PAST WHEN THERE WERE MOMENTS OF STRESS IN OUR RELATIONS, ON THIS OCCASION THERE HAD BEEN NO PRIOR DISCUSSION, NO REASON GIVEN, NO MOTIVE OFFERED FOR THE ACTION TAKEN SO FAR AS I COULD SEE, ONLY THE UNILATERAL IMPOSITION OF CONTROLS WHICH WERE CONTRARY BOTH TO THE LIBRARY AGREEMENT HE HAD SIGNED AS WELL AS TO NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CONVENTION. I REPEATED THAT THIS WAS AN UNACCEPTABLE WAY OF DOING BUSINESS. I WAS ALL THE MORE CONCERNED BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT THIS MIGHT HAVE ON CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN TOMORROW ON RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO ROMANIA. I SAID I HAD HELD OFF CABLING A SUMMARY OF SITUATION AND MY RECOMMENDATIONS UNTIL I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN FROM A SENIOR ROMANIAN OFFICIAL REASONS BEHIND GOR MOVES. SINCE FACT OF "BLOCKADE" WAS ALREADY KNOWN TO OTHER MISSIONS

I SAID I COULD NOT DELAY REPORTING SITUATION BEYOND LATE THIS AFTERNOON, SINCE WASHINGTON MIGHT ALREADY HAVE BEGUN TO RECEIVE BITS AND PIECES OF STORY. I THEREFORE NEEDED FROM HIM, OR DIRECTLY FROM MINISTER, AN AUTHORITATIVE EXPLANATION WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

3. GLIGA REPLIED THAT AS I KNEW HE HAD ONLY RETURNED TO BUCHAREST LAST NIGHT FROM A TRIP TO BONN. MACOVESCU HAD BEEN AWAY FROM BUCHAREST AND HE HAD NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO TALK WITH HIM. MFA AMERICAN DESK COUNSELOR RANGHET HAD BRIEFED HIM ON DCM'S DEMARCHE RELATING TO LIBRARY, BUT HE HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF OTHER DETAILS I HAD JUST SUPPLIED. HE SAID HE WAS HAPPY I HAD NOT YET CABLED WASHINGTON FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON. PRIOR TO OUR MEETING HE HAD LEARNED FROM SECURITY AUTHORITIES THAT ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN YESTERDAY TO POLICE GUARDING US EMBASSY AND ONE OR TWO OTHERS TO TAKE PRECAUTIONARY STEPS AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF AN UNTOWARD INCIDENT.
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5. I INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT WHEN OUR SECURITY OFFICER HAD SPOKEN LAST NIGHT WITH OUR ROMANIAN SECURITY LIAISON OFFICER, ONE CAPTAIN VOICU, VOICU HAD ASSURED HIM EVERYTHING WAS NORMAL. WHEN OUR SY OFFICER HAD PUT SAME QUESTION TO MILITIA MAN ON DUTY AT GATE LAST NIGHT AND I MYSELF THIS MORNING, WE HAD BOTH BEEN TOLD ORDERS HAD BEEN ISSUED TO BAR ALL ROMANIANS EXCEPT FOR EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES FROM ACCESS TO THE EMBASSY. GLIGA RESPONDED THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A MISTAKE SINCE THEIR ORDERS WERE ONLY TO CHECK PEOPLE AT THE LIBRARY, NOT TO DENY THEM ENTRY. I AGAIN INTERRUPTED TO SAY POLICE WERE TAKING NAMES AT THE LIBRARY, CONTRARY TO OUR BILATERAL AGREEMENT ON FREE ACCESS. GLIGA REPLIED HE DID NOT KNOW THIS BUT IT MIGHT BE A SECURITY PRECAUTION.

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THE POLICE WERE SIMPLY TRYING TO AVOID ANY ABNORMAL SITUATION ARISING. THEY WERE CHECKING PEOPLE NOT ONLY AT THE GATES TO OUR PREMISES BUT ALSO IN A WIDER ZONE AROUND THE EMBASSY AND THE LIBRARY.

6. I SAID IF THERE WERE A SECURITY SITUATION OF THIS TYPE KNOWN TO US IN WASHINGTON OR HERE, WE WOULD PROMPTLY COMMUNICATE IT. WE EXPECTED THE SAME TREATMENT FROM THE ROMANIANS. UNFORTUNATELY SUCH HAD NOT BEEN THE CASE IN THIS INSTANCE. I THEN ASKED FOR FURTHER DETAILS IN ORDER TO TAKE OUR OWN PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES, EMPHASIZING THAT I WANTED THEM TODAY. I REITERATED MY UNHAPPINESS OVER THE WAY MFA HAD HANDLED THE SITUATION AND SAID THAT IN ANY FUTURE EMERGENCY SITUATION SIMILAR TO THIS ONE I WOULD EXPECT TO BE INFORMED IMMEDIATELY AND FULLY. IF THERE WERE OTHER PROBLEMS WE NEEDED TO DISCUSS IN ANY WAY RELATED TO THIS SITUATION, I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT THEM RIGHT AWAY WITH HIM OR THE MINISTER.

7. GLIGA SAID HE COULD ASSURE ME THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF ANY EFFORT BY GOR TO IMPEDE US IN ANY WAY IN THE NORMAL CONDUCT OF OUR BUSINESS. HE HIMSELF DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE MILITIA MEN AT THE GATES WERE DENYING ENTRY TO ROMANIANS, BUT WOULD TRY TO GET MORE DETAILS AFTER LUNCH TODAY. HE APOLOGIZED FOR CONFUSION SURROUNDING MFA DUTY OFFICER'S INABILITY TO REACH A SENIOR
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OFFICER LAST NIGHT, BUT WANTED TO REASSURE ME THIS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH MILITIA SITUATION.

8. I ENDED CONVERSATION BY SAYING I EXPECTED MORE DETAILS FROM HIM THIS AFTERNOON ON SECURITY THREAT. I ALSO SAID I WOULD LIKE ASSURANCES THAT IN FUTURE IF I CALLED MFA AND SAID I HAD SOMETHING IMPORTANT AND URGENT TO COMMUNICATE, THAT I WOULD BE PROMPTLY PUT IN TOUCH WITH SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY.

9. AS GLIGA WAS ESCORTING US TO THE DOOR MACOVESCU SUDDENLY APPEARED AND PROMPTLY INVITED US BACK UPSTAIRS. THERE ENSUED ANOTHER 80 MINUTES OF CONVERSATION, MOST OF WHICH WILL BE REPORTED (MOSTLY ON TOPIC OF CURRENT ROMANIAN PRESS ATTACKS ON US HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN.) HE APOLOGIZED FOR MY INABILITY TO REACH HIM LAST NIGHT BUT SAID HE HAD BEEN IN PLOIESTI PREDEAL AND SNAGOV VISITING RELATIVES. AS SOON AS HE HAD REACHED BUCHAREST

HE HAD COME DIRECTLY TO THE MINISTRY TO SEE ME.

10. MACOVESCU RE-CONFIRMED GLIGA'S ASSURANCES THAT THERE WERE REPORTS OF POSSIBLE "MANIFESTATIONS" AGAINST OUR EMBASSY AND THIS WAS THE REASON FOR THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES BY THE MILITIA. HE SAID OTHER EMBASSIES INVOLVED WERE TURKEY, BELGIUM AND THE FRG. GLIGA REAPPEARED AT THIS POINT TO STATE HE HAD JUST BEEN TALKING WITH THE HEAD OF SECURITY WHO INSISTED NO ONE HAD BEEN ORDERED TO DENY ENTRY TO ANY ROMANIANS TO OUR PREMISES. HE SUGGESTED IT WAS A "PERSONAL INTERPRETATION, MUCH EXAGGERATED" BY THE POLICE ON DUTY THAT HAD LED TO THE SITUATION. MACOVESCU ORDERED HIM TO TELEPHONE AGAIN MILITIA HEADQUARTERS AND TO INFORM THEM THAT HE, THE MINISTER, REQUESTED THAT THE MATTER BE IMMEDIATELY STRAIGHTENED OUT. THERE WERE TO BE NO FURTHER MISUNDERSTANDINGS OR PERSONAL INTERPRETATIONS OF ORDERS BY POLICE GUARDING EMBASSIES.

11. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION MACOVESCU SAID INFORMATION WHICH AUTHORITIES HAD RELATED TO POSSIBLE TROUBLE IN THE FORM OF DEMONSTRATION FROM FOREIGNERS AND ROMANIANS. HE WOULDN'T BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PINNED DOWN FURTHER AS TO PRECISE DETAILS AS TO POTENTIAL TROUBLE MAKERS BUT DID COMMIT MINISTRY TO GET ANY OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION TO US TOMORROW. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID SITUATION WAS UNDER CONTROL FOR NOW, BUT WOULD BE WISE TO BE CAREFUL FOR A FEW DAYS MORE AND THAT CONTEXT THERE MIGHT BE AN OCCASIONAL CHECK. MACOVESCU SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT I COMMUNICATE TO DEPARTMENT THAT WE SHOULD ATTACH NO OTHER SIGNIFICANCE TO EVENTS OF PAST 24 HOURS THAN EXPLANATION HE AND GLIGA HAD GIVEN US. GOR WAS AS DESIROUS AS EVER IN DEVELOPMENT OF STRONG RELATIONS WITH U.S.

12. COMMENT: IT TAKES A HERCULEAN STRETCHING OF THE IMAGINATION TO BELIEVE MACOVESCU/GLIGA VERSION OF EVENTS IS ALL THERE IS TO THIS EPISODE. I AM ONLY WILLING TO GRANT THAT A CONFLUENCE OF EVENTS COULD HAVE DEVELOPED AS THEY DESCRIBED, BUT I AM NOT CONVINCED THIS IS THE WHOLE STORY. AT A MINIMUM I WOULD SPECULATE THIS IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE SECURITY APPARATUS OPERATING AS A LAW UNTO ITSELF, WITHOUT COORDINATION AND IN THIS INSTANCE WITH LITTLE IF ANY SENSE FOR THE FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF ITS ACTIONS. I AM NOT INCLINED NOW TO BELIEVE THAT CEAUSESCU PERSONALLY WAS AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING. WHATEVER MESSAGE WHATEVER GROUP OR GROUPS WITHIN THE REGIME WANTED TO TRANSMIT TO US BY THEIR ACTION, I THINK WE IN TURN HAVE LEFT NO ONE IN DOUBT THAT SUCH CONDUCT OF RELATIONS IS ABSOLUTELY UNACCEPTABLE TO US. TO THAT EXTENT THIS WAS A USEFUL EPISODE FOR BOTH SIDES. I SUGGEST THAT HARTMAN OR DEPUTY SECRETARY SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE INCIDENT ONCE NICOLAE RETURNS LATE APRIL 6 IN ORDER TO REINFORCE WHAT I HAVE SAID HERE.

BARNES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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